



## Important Dates Coming Soon

### Schedule change

Charles County Public Schools (CCPS) is moving all in-county high school varsity [football games](#) scheduled for tonight, to 10 a.m., Saturday, Sept. 18. The schedule is below.

- **La Plata High School** vs. Patuxent High School (held at La Plata)
- **Henry E. Lackey High School** vs. **Thomas Stone High School** (held at Lackey)
- **Maurice J. McDonough High School** vs. Calvert High School (held at Stone/homecoming)
- **North Point High School** vs. **Westlake High School** (held at North Point)

This change does not apply to the game scheduled between St. Charles High School and Leonardtown High School set for Sept. 17, 6 p.m. at Leonardtown.

In addition to school staffs and administrators, CCPS works with the Charles County Sheriff's Office to secure officers to provide support at high school football games. The officers work with school staffs during games to ensure the events are safe for all attendees. CCPS has not been able to secure adequate officer coverage for in-county games scheduled for this evening. The schedule changes may cause schools to adjust junior varsity events set for Sept. 18. These changes only affect tonight's games at this time.

### Principal of the Year

Nominate an outstanding leader for the annual [Principal of the Year award](#). Criteria for nomination includes five years of experience as a principal, three of which are with CCPS. The deadline for submission is Nov. 12. Materials should be sent to Ramona DiBenedetto at [rdibenedetto@ccboe.com](mailto:rdibenedetto@ccboe.com). Call 301-934-7242 with questions.



### Hispanic Heritage Month

Staff and students — in prekindergarten, kindergarten and first grade — at Daniel of St. Thomas Jenifer Elementary School kick off National Hispanic Heritage Month — Sept. 15 to Oct. 15. The students hold flags representing 20 Latin American countries. Right, Allison Ochoa, a prekindergarten student, holds a Mexican flag, representing the home country of her parents.



### CCPS adjusts schedules for upcoming indoor events

Charles County Public Schools (CCPS) is adjusting schedules for several upcoming planned indoor events.

The changes affect school open houses, high school homecoming dances, middle school dances, volunteer support in schools and planned field trips. The changes will decrease the amount of people gathering inside of school buildings.

Although students and staff are back in buildings for in-person learning, CCPS is limiting the number of outside visitors when possible to support safe learning environments. CCPS has also updated standard operating procedures (SOP) regarding COVID-19 testing at schools. Below are important

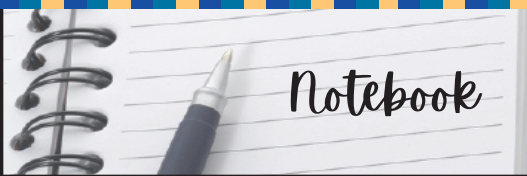
updates for parents, students and staff.

#### Virtual open houses, other school events

All schools and centers will hold upcoming open houses and back-to-school nights virtually. The dates and times of the events will be as close to the original schedule as posted earlier in the school year. Principals will share updated information direct with families, including any change to their event date and time.

Similar to last school year, principals and teachers will send virtual links to parents. Parents with specific questions about the open house event planned for their child's school should contact the school directly.

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## Hearings planned

Superintendent Navarro recommended at the September Board meeting Proposal A for [middle school redistricting](#). The Board of Education will accept comments on the Superintendent's recommendation at two public hearings. The first hearing is 6:30 p.m., Monday, Sept. 27, in person at Westlake High School. The second hearing is 6 p.m., Tuesday, Sept. 28, virtually through Zoom. Community members are encouraged to attend the public hearings and provide comments to the Board about the superintendent's recommendation. Comments can be shared electronically to [redistrict@ccboe.com](mailto:redistrict@ccboe.com).

## Teacher of the Year awards

CCPS is now accepting nominations for the [Maryland Teacher of the Year](#) and *The Washington Post* Teacher of the Year award programs. The criteria for nomination includes at least five years of teaching and nominations must be a full-time classroom teacher. Nominations are submitted by school principals to CCPS staff who oversee the awards programs. Submission suggestions can be made by teachers, students or community members. More information can be found at [MyCCPS](#) and nominations are due by Nov. 12. Nominations must be submitted electronically to [rdibenedetto@ccboe.com](mailto:rdibenedetto@ccboe.com). Call 301-934-7242 with questions.

## Speaking of the ToY award

Stay tuned for more information about an upcoming Maryland Teacher of the Year special. The Maryland State Department of Education will air the Maryland Teacher of the Year Special at 8 p.m. Oct. 7, showcasing all Maryland Teacher of the Year finalists. Alexis Eaton of Dr. James Craik Elementary School was the Charles County Public Schools Teacher of the Year for 2020-21. The Maryland Teacher of the Year will be announced at the end of the program. An invitation from MSDE will be sent out at a later date and will include MPT2 area stations, including cable stations and an option to view the program on YouTube.

## In Memoriam Felicia Gaither

Felicia Gaither, an instructional assistant at Maurice J. McDonough High School, passed away on Friday, Sept. 10.

Gaither's adult life was dedicated to helping others. Prior to starting with Charles County Public Schools as a substitute and later an IA, she operated a daycare and worked as a certified nursing assistant.

At McDonough, Gaither was an IA for the ISR program where she worked closely with Jean Washington, an IA who coordinates substitutes for the school. Washington said she and Gaither were more than coworkers, they were close friends.

"She was a wonderful, good-hearted person," Washington said. "She would do anything she could to help where she was needed."

Gaither was flexible and dependable. If she was pulled from a task to help in a classroom, she quickly found her footing and exceeded expectations.

While she excelled at her job, it was her ability to build relationships with staff and students that made her stand out, Washington said. Students would drop by Gaither's room to say 'hi' or check in. "She loved the kids," Washington said. "And the kids loved her, too."

Carmencita Bell, a vice principal at McDonough, agreed.



Felicia  
Gaither

"She put her family first, then the family at McDonough and her neighborhood," Bell said. "She was totally dedicated to her job and the students. There was not a student who didn't love her, even if she was a little strict with them. They always came to her."

During her time at McDonough, Gaither was an assistant swim coach and was a fan of the Rams, especially basketball. Her love for the game and players — including her sons — would sometimes get the better of her, Bell said. Gaither was told more than once to "Get off the court!" said Bell, remembering her friend's excitement at games.

Gaither was a stalwart at morning bus duty, helping Bell and alternatively joking with drivers or scolding them if needed.

"Felicia Gaither was one of a kind," Bell said. "What else do you say about a mother, friend, coworker, advocate for students and a true human being?"

"It's a great loss for the employees and students," Washington said. "There are not enough words to tell you what kind of person she was."

A memorial service is planned for 2 p.m. Sept. 18 at Israel Total Life Ministry at 64 Industrial Park Drive in Waldorf. The family asks visitors to plan accordingly as the attendance is expected to be high. Masks are required.

## Apply for a MRSPA mini grant by Nov. 1

The Maryland Retired School Personnel Association, through its MRSPA Fund, is offering [six mini grants](#) to classroom teachers in Maryland. The grants may be used on projects or activities that are not funded through the school system or Parent Teacher Organization.

Mini grant applications are due by Nov. 1.

Applications will be reviewed Nov. 15 and winners will be notified by January

2022. Six mini grants of up to \$300 will be awarded.

Teacher and principal signatures are required on the application to ensure that the activity or project in the application is approved by the school leadership to support, enhance or supplement the student learning experience.

For more information about the mini grants and an application, visit [www.mrspa.org](http://www.mrspa.org).



# SCHEDULES

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CCPS held in-person meet-and-greet events in August for parents and students. As a result, some COVID-19 cases were reported to the school system of sick visitors who attended those events.

School administrators have been asked to offer meetings virtually or outdoors when possible. This may include parent conferences and meetings, PTO meetings, information nights and back-to-school events, and open houses.

## CCPS tightens COVID-19 testing procedures at schools

CCPS has updated its protocols for the testing of sick students and staff by a school nurse. Students with a known exposure who want to test out of quarantine after seven days with a negative COVID-19 test must now visit their doctor, use an outside vendor or test through the Charles County Department of Health. The health department offers free testing three times a week. Families may also elect to quarantine their child for 10 days and return to school without testing. Staff who are exposed outside of school will no longer be allowed to receive a COVID-19 test at school to end a quarantine early. Staff should visit their doctor, use an outside vendor or test through the health department on day seven, or wait until day 10 to return to work without a test.

Rapid tests will only be administered by nurses at their discretion for students or staff who display severe COVID-19 symptoms. Any student or staff member who pre-screens as potentially positive for COVID-19 will be offered a PCR test. Staff and students may not return to school or school activities until the results of the test are known. Additionally, individuals who refuse the PCR test after pre-screening as potentially positive will be presumed COVID-19 positive and excluded from school and school activities for ten days. CCPS also updated the COVID-19 pre-screening questionnaire.

[Click here to view the updated SOP.](#)

[Click here to access the updated prescreening questionnaire.](#)

## High school homecoming dances, middle school dances canceled

All CCPS high school homecoming dances are canceled until further notice from CCPS. Homecoming games scheduled and set in the CCPS Handbook/Calendar are planned to still take place. Homecoming games are scheduled at outdoor athletic venues.

While there is no mask requirement for adults or students in outdoor settings, CCPS highly encourages outdoor mask use for unvaccinated adults/students attending athletic outdoor events.

## Field trips restricted to in-county, regional areas

CCPS is limiting in-person field trips for students to regional locations that include Charles County and southern Prince George's County.

This does not apply to the high school athletics program – most regular season events are scheduled in Southern Maryland and these students are required to undergo weekly COVID-19 screening if they are not vaccinated.

CCPS has standard operating procedures in place that require COVID-19 symptomatic students to be picked up from school within one hour of parent notification.

Field trip permission forms will require parents to consent to being available to pick up their child during a field trip if they become symptomatic. Limiting field trip travel will also assist staff in the contact tracing process, if needed.

## Limited volunteer program participation

Schools will support a limited number of volunteers to aid with field trips. Volunteers will have to go through a background check, and consent to completing the CCPS pre-screening health questionnaire before coming into contact with students or staff. Principals

will designate a coordinator at each school to oversee the volunteer process. Community members interested in limited volunteer opportunities should contact their child's school for specific details.

## Instruction for sick, quarantined students

Schools have instructional plans for students who are out of school, either from COVID-19 or another illness, or have been asked by CCPS to quarantine. All instructional plans for schools are posted on individual school websites.

## Sick individuals should stay home

Limiting the number of people who enter a school building — particularly those who are not inside of CCPS schools daily such as students, staff and teachers — will aid staff who conduct COVID-19 contact tracing.

Staff in the CCPS Office of School Safety and Security oversees contact tracing for every positive case of COVID-19 reported to the CCPS Office of School Administration and the Office of Human Resources. School staff assist with contact tracing, as well.

The safety of schools is a community effort among staff, teachers and parents. CCPS asks parents to complete the COVID-19 pre-screening questionnaire daily before sending their child on the bus or to school.

The questionnaire is posted [here on the CCPS website](#). Staff are also asked to assess their health before coming to work.

Parents with a sick child should keep their children home, and not send their child to school or on the bus.

CCPS also asks for children to be kept home if they have been exposed to a COVID-19 positive person in the last seven days (and are not vaccinated), live with someone who is COVID-19 positive (and are not vaccinated), are in quarantine due to another exposure or waiting for a COVID-19 test result. Staff are also asked to follow the same guidelines.

# Food and Nutrition Service hiring part time, substitute staff

Know someone looking for a part-time job, or who needs flexibility due to family obligations? Charles County Public Schools (CCPS) [Food and Nutrition Service](#) (FNS) is hiring part time and substitute staff. Three-to-five-hour position are open and for those who don't want to work every day, they can apply to be a substitute food service employee. Go to [www.ccboc.com/index.php/currentopenings](http://www.ccboc.com/index.php/currentopenings) to apply.

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CCPS provides nondiscriminatory equal access to school facilities in accordance with its Use of Facilities rules to designated youth groups (including, but not limited to, the Boy Scouts).



## CCPS receives proclamation

Charles County commissioners' President Reuben B. Collins, left, stopped by the Jesse L. Starkey Administration building on Wednesday to present Superintendent of Schools Maria V. Navarro with a proclamation recognizing National Hispanic Heritage Month. The month — Sept. 15 to Oct. 15 — honors and celebrates the contributions Hispanic Americans have made to the country and society.

## Transportation moves to hire permanent, substitute bus drivers

Charles County Public Schools (CCPS) provides bus transportation to more than 24,000 students in Charles County and is still working through bus issues as a result of driver shortages and later than usual student enrollments.

Transportation staff is working through help desk tickets submitted by parents. Tickets continue to range from bus stop requests and stop changes, to complaints about delayed bus arrivals.

Daily, transportation staff who oversee and address help tickets are being pulled to cover bus routes for students. This is causing a significant delay in ticket response. CCPS continues to work with its 26 bus contractors to ensure routes are covered by drivers, and to cover routes of any drivers not able to report for the day. CCPS does not have adequate substitute bus drivers. This contributes to



inconsistent arrival times, and could lead to service interruptions in the future.

### How to apply to be a CCPS bus driver

[CCPS Transportation](https://www.ccboe.com/transportation/) has bus driver and bus attendant applications on its website at <https://www.ccboe.com/transportation/>.

## Personnel

Apply for positions online at [www.ccboe.com/jobs/currentopenings.php](http://www.ccboe.com/jobs/currentopenings.php). All teaching positions require a bachelor's degree and MSDE certification requirements.

### Job Openings

**Technical Assistant in Accountability** — Jesse L. Starkey Administration Building, 12-month position. Experience working with databases such as Synergy/SIS Gradebook required. Knowledge of Synergy/SIS that includes the ability to create, edit and run queries, and format files from the database. Apply by Sept. 21.

**Staff Accountant-Restricted Funds/Budget** — Jesse L. Starkey Administration Building, 12-month position. Bachelor's degree in accounting, finance or related field required. Master's degree and/or CPA preferred. Apply by Sept. 22.

**Secretary to the Principal** — Matthew Henson Middle School, 12-month position. High school diploma required. Experience with

Quicken or QuickBooks is desirable, along with knowledge of budgets, payroll and cash handling. Apply by 21.

**Secretary to Transportation** — Annex 1, 12-month position. High school diploma required, associate's degree preferred. Two years of experience in effective office practices and procedures required. Apply by Sept. 22.

**Educational Interpreter** — Dr. Gustavus Brown Elementary School, 10-month position. A degree in sign language interpretation preferably with an emphasis on the educational setting. Must have an appropriate score on the Educational Interpreter Performance Assessment (EIPA) and hold a certification as a sign language interpreter preferably with an emphasis for the educational setting. Apply by Sept. 22.

**Building Service Manager** — Billingsley Elementary School, 12-month position.

The ability to read and write effectively and be physically capable of performing manual labor required. Candidates must have good verbal communications and human relation skills. Apply by Sept. 28.

**IEP Facilitator** — All schools, 11-month position. A bachelor's degree is required, a master's is preferred. Candidates must have or be eligible for a Maryland Standard Professional Certificate with special educational endorsement. Apply by Dec. 31.

**Food Service Substitute** — All schools, 10-month position. A high school diploma is desirable or sufficient education to have basic skills in reading, record keeping and math. Position open until filled.

### Extra Pay Positions

**Assistant Coach for Winter Cheer** — Thomas Stone High School.

**Head Volleyball Coach** — Maurice J. McDonough High School.